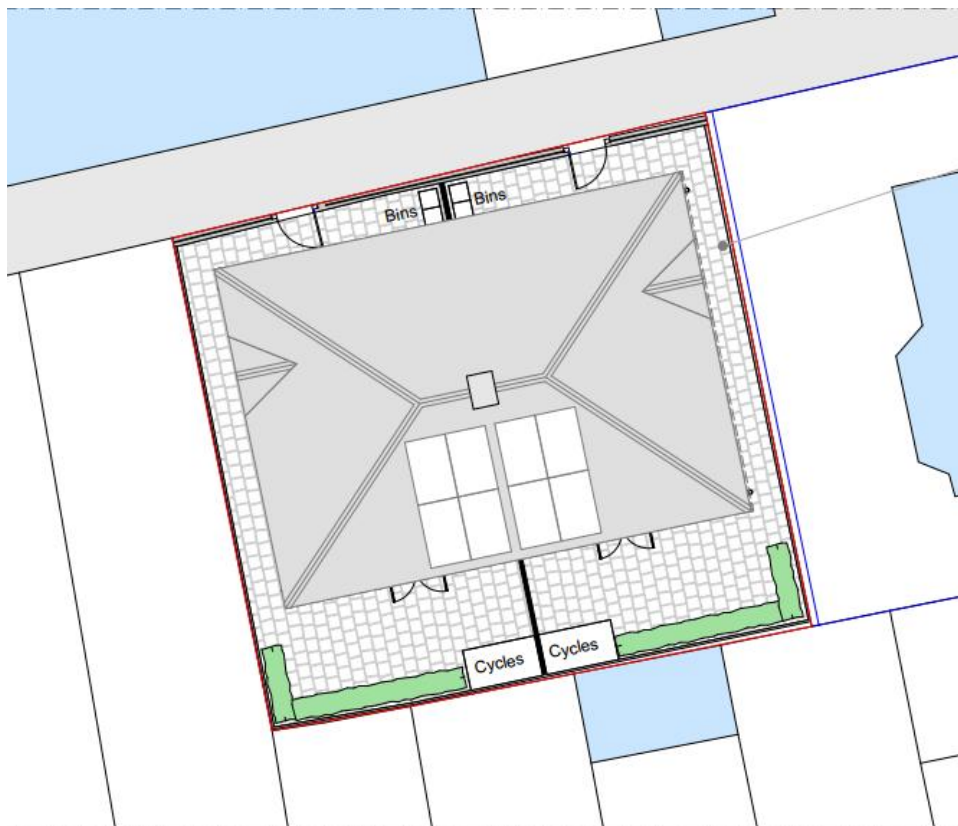


PLANNING STATEMENT

Land to the Rear of 70–72 Whitley Street, Reading RG2 0EQ

**Proposed Development: Erection of 2no. single-storey
one-bedroom dwellings**



Proposed Site Plan

1.0 Introduction

This Planning Statement has been prepared in support of a full planning application for the erection of 2no. single-storey one-bedroom dwellings on land to the rear of 70–72 Whitley Street, Reading.

The application has been informed by:

- The applicant's original pre-application submission (February 2025)

- The Council's pre-application response (Ref: PL/25/0268)
- The subsequent pre-application addendum advice (August 2025)

The proposal has been fundamentally revised in response to officer feedback, most notably through the transition from a two-storey cottage scheme to a low-scale bungalow form, specifically to address concerns relating to:

- Overdevelopment
 - Visual impact
 - Residential amenity
-

2.0 Site Description

The application site comprises a parcel of land located to the rear of 70–72 Whitley Street, historically forming part of the former public house yard.

The site:

- Is approximately 170sqm in area
- Is broadly square in shape and relatively level
- Is accessed via an established pedestrian route between No.1 and 70–72 Whitley Street
- Lies within a highly sustainable urban location close to Reading Town Centre

The surrounding context is mixed in character:

- Ground floor commercial use along Whitley Street
- Residential properties to the north, south and west, including Essex Street and Spring Terrace
- A varied built form including terraces, flats and ancillary structures

The site is currently underutilised and of limited visual or functional value, representing an opportunity for appropriate redevelopment.

3.0 Planning History and Pre-Application Context

3.1 Earlier Proposals

A previous pre-application submission for a higher density flatted scheme was not supported by the Council, primarily due to:

- Overdevelopment of the site
- Harm to character and appearance

- Poor residential amenity

The Council advised that a significantly lower density and smaller-scale form of development should be explored.

3.2 Current Pre-Application Response

The subsequent pre-application proposal for two semi-detached cottages was also met with concerns relating to:

- Cramped form of development
 - Visual dominance
 - Overlooking and poor relationships with neighbouring properties
 - Insufficient landscaping and amenity space
 - Lack of parking provision
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3.3 Addendum Advice

The addendum advice provided a more balanced position and confirmed:

- The principle of residential development on the site is acceptable in policy terms
- A car-free approach may be justified in this sustainable location
- A “cottage style” or small-scale residential form may be appropriate

However, it emphasised that the key issue remained:

Whether development could be achieved without unacceptable harm to the amenity of existing and future occupants

Importantly, the addendum suggested that:

- A reduction in scale, potentially to a single-storey form, may be necessary
 - Even two units may represent the upper limit of development
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4.0 The Proposed Development

The application seeks permission for:

- The erection of 2no. single-storey one-bedroom dwellings
- A semi-detached bungalow form

- Provision of cycle and bin storage within the site
- A car-free development

4.1 Layout and Accommodation

As shown on the submitted plans (Drawing 9424 PL-04.02):

- Each dwelling comprises:
 - Open plan kitchen/living area
 - One double bedroom
 - Bathroom and storage space
- Units are arranged symmetrically around a central dividing wall
- Each unit has a compact but functional internal layout designed for efficient use of space

4.2 Design and Appearance

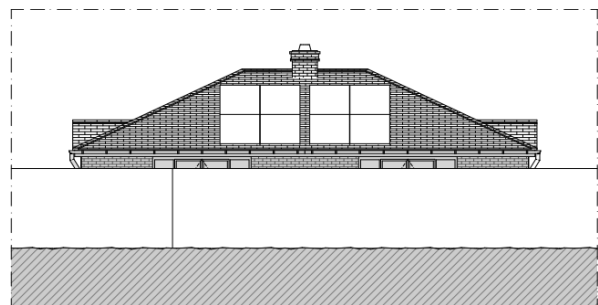
The dwellings adopt a modest, traditional form:

- Hipped roof design to reduce visual bulk
- Simple and symmetrical elevations
- Materials include:
 - Aldwick blend brick
 - Natural slate roof
 - Aluminium window frames

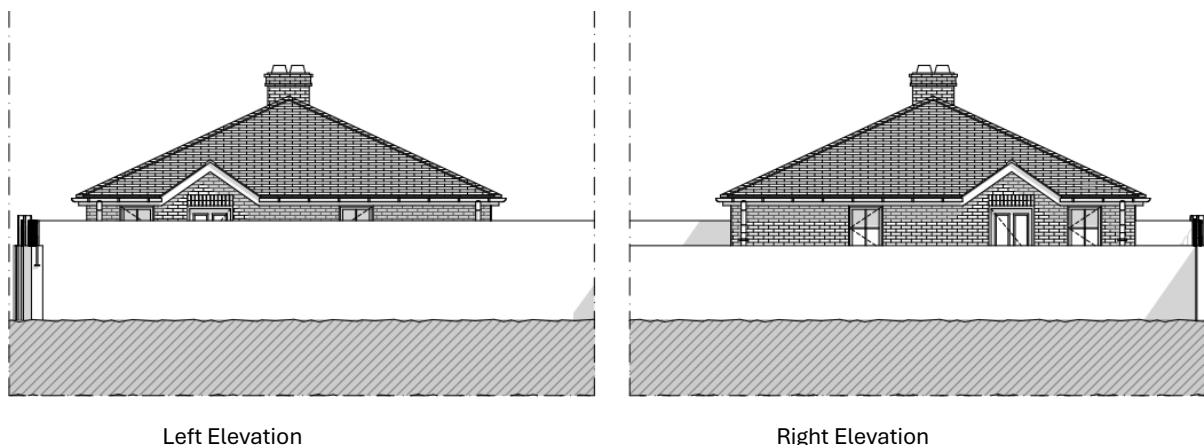
The design reflects a subordinate, low-profile form of development appropriate to a constrained back land site.



Front Elevation



Rear Elevation



5.0 Planning Policy Context

Section 38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that planning applications are determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Development Plan includes the Reading Borough Local Plan. The most relevant policies to this proposal are considered to be:

CC1 – Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development

CC2 – Sustainable Design and Construction

CC3 – Adaptation to Climate Change

CC7 – Design and the Public Realm

CC8 – Safeguarding Amenity

H3 – Affordable Housing

H5 – Standards for New Housing

H10 – Private and Communal Outdoor Space

EN12 – Biodiversity and the Green Network

EN14 – Trees, Hedges and Woodlands

TR5 – Car and Cycle Parking

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is also a material consideration, particularly in relation to the effective use of previously developed land and the delivery of housing in sustainable urban locations.

The application site forms part of the former curtilage of the public house at 70–72 Whitley Street and is therefore considered previously developed land rather than private residential garden land. As confirmed through the pre-application process, the principle of residential development on the site may be acceptable subject to the detailed

design, amenity and environmental impacts of the scheme being satisfactorily addressed. The proposal has therefore been fundamentally revised in response to officer feedback and should be assessed in the context of that substantial reduction in scale, height and intensity.

6.0 Design and Residential Amenity

Policies CC7 and CC8 of the Reading Borough Local Plan require development to respond positively to local character and safeguard the amenity of existing and future occupiers. Policies H5 and H10 are also relevant in ensuring that new homes provide an appropriate standard of accommodation and usable outdoor space.

The Council's pre-application responses identified the principal concerns with the earlier schemes as overdevelopment of the site, visual dominance, overlooking, poor relationships with neighbouring properties and insufficient amenity provision.

The current proposal has been specifically revised to address those concerns. Most notably, the scheme has evolved from a two-storey cottage form to a modest single-storey bungalow form. As shown on the submitted drawings, the proposal now comprises a low-profile semi-detached building with a hipped roof, materially reducing the scale, massing and visual impact of the development when compared to the previous scheme.

This is a significant change in planning terms. The removal of all first-floor accommodation eliminates the elevated overlooking concerns previously identified toward neighbouring properties, particularly those to Essex Street and Spring Terrace, and substantially reduces the perception of enclosure and visual dominance. The revised scheme therefore provides a materially improved relationship with adjoining residential occupiers.

In terms of appearance, the design is intentionally simple and modest, using traditional materials including Aldwick blend brick, natural grey slate roofing and aluminium window frames. These materials, together with the compact form and hipped roof profile, create a restrained form of development which is considered appropriate to the mixed urban character of the surrounding area.

The proposed dwellings provide simple and efficient one-bedroom layouts with direct access, natural light and outdoor space. It is acknowledged that both the internal accommodation and external amenity areas are more modest than those typically associated with larger family housing within the surrounding area. However, this must be considered in the context of the type of accommodation proposed. The surrounding properties are predominantly traditional 2, 3 and 4-bedroom family houses with corresponding family-sized garden areas, whereas the current proposal seeks to provide small-scale one-bedroom accommodation within a highly sustainable urban location. As such, the external amenity expectations for the proposed units are

materially different and do not need to replicate the family-oriented garden sizes characteristic of the wider area.

The proposal provides approximately 5sqm of private external amenity space per unit together with direct access to outdoor areas. Whilst compact, this level of provision is considered proportionate for small one-bedroom accommodation of this nature and should be assessed in the context of the constrained brownfield site, the highly accessible location, and the substantial redesign undertaken to address the more significant concerns relating to overlooking, dominance and overdevelopment raised through the pre-application process. On balance, the proposal is considered to provide an acceptable form of accommodation for future occupiers in this location.

7.0 Landscaping, Ecology and Sustainability

Policies EN12 and EN14 seek to ensure that development contributes positively toward biodiversity and landscaping, whilst Policies CC2 and CC3 require sustainable design and climate change mitigation measures to be incorporated.

The Council's earlier advice raised concern that the previous schemes allowed insufficient opportunity for meaningful landscaping due to the intensity of development proposed. The revised single-storey form creates improved opportunities for soft landscaping around the site boundaries and a more balanced relationship between built development and planted areas when compared with the earlier proposals.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal prepared by Dr. Jonty Denton (April 2026) has been submitted in support of the application. The report confirms that the site comprises predominantly hardstanding and previously disturbed land within an urban setting, with no priority habitats identified on site.

The appraisal confirms that the site has negligible potential to support protected species including bats, reptiles and amphibians, and no evidence of badger activity or significant ecological constraints were identified.

The proposal nevertheless incorporates biodiversity enhancement measures proportionate to the scale of the development, including soft landscaping, wildlife-friendly planting, and the provision of integrated bird and bat boxes as shown on the submitted drawings.

In sustainability terms, the development is intended to incorporate integrated solar photovoltaic panels together with energy-efficient construction measures including enhanced insulation, energy-efficient glazing, airtight construction, low-energy lighting and efficient gas-fired heating and hot water systems. The modest scale and simple form of the dwellings also support an efficient and sustainable approach to construction and energy use.

The proposal is designed to achieve, where technically feasible, at least a 19% reduction in regulated carbon emissions over the Target Emission Rate required under

Building Regulations, through a combination of integrated solar photovoltaic panels, enhanced fabric performance, energy-efficient glazing, airtight construction, low-energy lighting and efficient gas-fired heating and hot water systems.

8.0 Transport and Parking

Policy TR5 requires parking provision to be considered in the context of accessibility, sustainability and the likely impact on the surrounding highway network.

No on-site car parking is proposed. However, the site lies within a highly sustainable location close to local shops, services, bus routes and Reading Town Centre. The proposal also provides cycle storage within the site, as shown on the submitted plans.

Refuse and recycling storage is provided within the site as shown on the submitted plans. Given the small scale of the development comprising only two dwellings, waste collection can be undertaken through standard kerbside collection arrangements, with bins presented to the frontage on collection days and returned thereafter. The arrangement is considered proportionate and acceptable for a development of this scale.

Whilst the Council's initial pre-application comments raised concerns regarding the absence of parking, the subsequent addendum advice accepted that a case could be made for a car-free form of development in this location. Given the sustainable location of the site and the limited scale of the proposal comprising only two one-bedroom dwellings, the absence of on-site parking is considered acceptable in this instance.

9.0 Affordable Housing

The applicant acknowledges the requirements of Policy H3 in relation to affordable housing contributions. As set out previously, the applicant is willing to address the Council's affordable housing requirements through the appropriate legal agreement mechanism if required.

10. Construction and Servicing

Given the modest scale of the proposed development comprising only two single-storey dwellings, construction activities would be temporary and limited in duration.

Deliveries, contractor activity and waste management would be appropriately managed having regard to the constrained urban nature of the site and surrounding residential properties. Any detailed construction management measures relating to hours of work, noise, dust suppression and contractor parking could be secured by condition if required by the Local Planning Authority.

11.0 Conclusion

This proposal represents a carefully considered and substantially revised form of development which directly responds to the concerns identified through the pre-application process.

Compared to the earlier schemes, the current proposal provides a materially reduced scale of development through a single-storey bungalow form, removing the first-floor overlooking and excessive bulk that previously gave rise to concern. The revised scheme also provides improved opportunities for landscaping and biodiversity enhancement, together with modest residential accommodation on previously developed land within a highly sustainable location.

Whilst the site is constrained due to its backland position, the revised proposal achieves a more appropriate balance between the efficient use of land and the protection of neighbouring residential amenity. On balance, the proposal is considered to represent an acceptable and policy-compliant form of small-scale residential infill development within the urban area of Reading.